

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2787

EXDIS

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TAGS: PFOR, SY, US, IS, UN, PLO, XF

SUBJ: KHADDAM COMMENTS ON ISLAMIC FONMINS CONFERENCE

REF: DAMASCUS 2625

1. SUMMARY: KHADDAM ASSERTS CAMPAIGN TO SUSPEND ISRAEL FROM UN HAD EASY SUCCESS AT JIDDA. SYRIA AND OTHER ARAB STATES WANT BEST POSSIBLE RELATIONS WITH US BUT RESENT OUR ACTING AS ISRAEL'S ATTORNEY. GOAL OF SUSPENSION CAMPAIGN IS ACHIEVEMENT OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORY. CONTINUING HIS CRITICISM OF FURTHER INTERIM STEPS, KHADDAM PREDICTS, SERIOUS TROUBLE IN AREA IF EGYPT AGREES TO NEW INTERIM ARRANGEMENT WHICH HE FULLY EXPECTS IT TO DO. END SUMMARY.

2. REVIEWED ISLAMIC FONMIN CONFERENCE IN JULY 22 MEETING WITH KHADDAM. KHADDAM NOTED VARIOUS ARAB FONMINS HAD TOLD HIM IN JIDDA ABOUT THEIR PROMISES TO USG TO TRY TO BLOCK THE SUSPENSION CAMPAGIN. "BUT WHEN THE RESOLUTION WAS TABLED, THEY JUST SAT THERE AND APPLAUDED." IN COURSE OUR DISCUSSION ASKED HIM IF HE HAD READ SECRETARY'S SPEECH AT MILWAUKEE WHICH HAD SET FORTH RATIONALE FOR OUR CONCERN ABOUT
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FUTURE OF UN. KHADDAM REPLIED HE WAS, INDEDD, FAMILIAR WITH

THE SPEECH AND WE SHOULD KNOW THAT IN JIDDA IT HAD BEEN INTERPRETED AS THREAT AGAINST THIRD WORLD. I SAID I COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THIS BUT NOTED THAT AMERICAN PRESS HAD UNDERPLAYED SPEECH'S POSITIVE REFERENCES TO UN. WE HAD SOUGHT TO CONVEY OUR CONCERN ABOUT NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON UN FUTURE OF BLOC VOTING WITH ITS CONTINUED CONFRONTATIONS, INCLUDING EFFORTS TO EXCLUDE MEMBER STATES, ON US PUBLIC OPINION. NET RESULT OF ALIENATING US OPINION AND THOSE IN OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH AS WESTERN EUROPE COULD ONLY BE HARMFUL TO SO MANY UN PROGRAMS AND FUNCTIONS WHICH RELY UPON SUPPORT OF PUBLIC OPINION.

3. KHADDAM REPLIED THAT AS FOR US CONCERN ABOUT THE UN FUTURE IT IS PRECISELY SYRIA'S PARALLEL CONCERN WHICH PROMPTS IT TO PURSUE THIS CAMPAIGN IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE UN CHARTER AND SECURE IMPLEMENTATION OF UN RESOLUTIONS. WHEN AMERICA CLOSES ITS EYES TO ISRAEL'S VIOLATIONS AND OTHERWISE HELPS ISRAEL, IT SHOULD NOT EXPECT OTHERS TO BELIEVE THAT THE US IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE UN OR ANY OF ITS PROGRAMS OR FUNCTIONS.

4. RECALLING OUR JULY 10 CONVERSATION BEFORE THE JIDDA CONFERENCE (DAMASCUS 2625), SAID I WONDERED IF I HAD FULLY APPRECIATED JUST WHAT SYRIA HOPED TO ACCOMPLISH BY PURSUING THIS CAMPAIGN. WAS IT PRINCIPALLY THE ISOLATION OF ISRAEL AND PERHAPS ALSO THE US? NO, KHADDAM SAID, "THE US IS NOT OUR ENEMY AND WE DO NOT SEEK ITS ISOLATION." BUT, HE WARNED, IF THE US CONTINUES TO ACT AS ISRAEL'S ATTORNEY THEN THE THIRD WORLD'S ATTENTION WOULD BE INCREASINGLY DIRECTED TO DEVELOPING MEASURES " TO REPEL SUCH US ATTACKS." SYRIA AND THE OTHER ARAB STATES SINCERELY WANT TO DEVELOP GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US. THEY HAVE OPENED ALL DOORS TO THIS GOAL BUT GOOD RELATIONS CANNOT DEPEND ON ONE SIDE'S EFFORTS ALONE. ALMOST AS AN ASIDE, HE SAID, "WE CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR SUPPLYING ARMS TO ISRAEL. WHAT WE RESENT IS YOUR POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING FOR ISRAEL."

5. SAID I HAD TWO FURTHER QUESTIONS. WAS THIS CAMPAIGN NECESSARY, I.E., HAD NOT ISRAEL'S ISOLATION IN THE WORLD ALREADY BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY ACHIEVED? RECALLED AFRO-CONFIDENTIAL

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ASIAN SEVERANCE OF DIPLOMATIC TIE WITH ISRAEL. SECONDLY, COULD HE EXPLAIN HOW CAMPAIGN COULD BE EFFECTIVE IN ACHIEVING THE GOALS THAT SYRIA DESIRES? KHADDAM REPLIED, "ISOLATION IS NOT, OF COURSE A GOAL IN ITSELF, THE REAL GOAL IS ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. DON'T FORGET ISRAEL REMAINS TODAY ONLY 59 KILOMETERS FROM DAMASCUS. TO ACHIEVE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, A CAMPAIGN IS NECESSARY TO SUSPEND ISRAEL AND THEREBY FURTHER ISOLATE

IT FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD, IN PARTICULAR FROM THE WESTERN WORLD, AND THIS CAMPAIGN WILL SUCCEED."

6. AT THIS POINT KHADDAM TOLD HIS INTERPRETER TO STOP TAKING NOTES AND PUT THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE OFF THE RECORD. HE ASKED IF I HAD ANY DETAILS ON THE LATEST ISRAELI PROPOSALS AND EGYPTIAN REACTION. SAID I HAD NONE AND ASKED HIM IN TURN WHAT HE PREDICTED AS OUTCOME OF CURRENT EXCHANGES BOTH CONCERNING UN MANDATE AND FURTHER INTERIM STEP. KHADDAM REPLIED HE FORESAW EGYPTIAN RENEWAL OF UNEF MANDATE, POSSIBLY FOR PERIOD NOT EXCEEDING TWO MONTHS. HE FURTHER PREDICTED ACHIEVEMENT OF SOME FORM OF INTERIM STEP. HE FORESAW SHARP PALESTINIAN REACTION TO A SINAI STEP LEADING TO ANTI-US "EXPLOSIONS" (SPEAKING FIGURATIVELY) THROUGHOUT THE NEAR EAST. HZ THEN SAID VERY SOMBERLY, "THIS ARRANGEMENT WILL BE BAD FOR SADAT AND HIS POSITION WILL DETERIORATE RAPIDLY. HIS PLEDGES CONCERNING THE INTERIM STEP WILL BE ONLY INK ON PAPER." AN INTERIM STEP ALONG SINAI, FURTHERMORE, WILL BE BAD FOR SYRIA, BAD FOR THE AREA AND BAD FOR THE US. INTERIM STEPS CANNOT ACHIEVE PEACE, HE CONCLUDED.

7. REPLIED THAT NO ONE IN WASHINGTON WAS TALKING OF "ACHIEVING PEACE" JUST THOUGHT INTERIM STEPS IN EITHER SINAI OR IN GOLAN. WE SEEK MOVEMENT TO GET NEW PERCEPTIONS AND FURTHER BREAKTHROUGHS.

8. COMMENT: I WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECTS OF ALTERING KHADDAM'S BELIEF IN VALUE OF SUSPENSION CAMPAIGN BUT HOPED SOME OF TALKING POINTS ABOUT MILWAUKEE SPEECH, (STATE 170841) MIGHT PRY OPEN HIS OUTLOOK ON THE UN SO HE COULD VIEW IT AS AN ORGANIZATION CONCERNED WITH SO MANY OTHER GLOBAL ISSUES OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE FUTURE WHICH SYRIAN CAMPAIGN COULD DAMAGE. HE IS, HOWEVER, A ONE ISSUE
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MAN. HIS APPARENTLY SMOOTH SUCCESS AT JIDDA HAS DONE NOTHING TO DISCOURAGE HIM FROM CONTINUING ALONG THE SAME PATH, AT LEAST UNTIL HE PERCEIVES ANOTHER COURSE MORE FAVORABLE TO ARAB INTERESTS.
MURPHY

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